

Yesterday, Martin Luther King Day, I went to the Catholic Center in New York City for a meeting with the bishops of the eight dioceses of New York state. The meeting was the first of four regularly scheduled meetings we have during the year. The others are held in June, September and November. Occasionally, we meet at other times.

At our holiday meeting in New York we covered a range of items, including insurance, tax questions, ministry, legislative and public policy issues and our upcoming *ad limina* visit to Rome. None of the issues were controversial but the meeting took quite a bit of time. Some of the questions required a lot of attention to detail and a fair amount of discussion.

Of greatest personal interest to me was our attention to the *ad limina* visit to Rome, which the bishops of our state will make during the last week of February. For those unfamiliar with the term, *ad limina* means "to the threshold" or "to the doorway." It is the common term for the visit every diocesan bishop is required to make to the Holy See every five years. The origin and heart of the journey is to visit the tombs of Saints Peter and Paul, to renew our faith, and to show our esteem for and union with the successor of Peter, now Pope John Paul II.

In the course of time, the custom of reporting on the state of each diocese at the time of the "ad limina" visit has developed. These reports are made in written form according to a standard format and

along the way



BY BISHOP MATTHEW H. CLARK

are sent to Rome some weeks in advance of our visit. In theory, we will receive comments about our report during our stay in Rome. In practice, and for understandable reasons, this has never happened in my experience. Instead we have received written comments many weeks after the event. My guess is that the upcoming Consistory and the state of our Holy Father's health ensure that the feedback on our reports will happen as in past visits.

My reference to the health of our Holy Father is not meant to convey any special knowledge about that issue. All I know is what I have observed and what I read in newspapers. I mention it in the context of our impending visit because I wonder if he will be able or should be as generous with his time with us as he has been in the past.

In past visits he has been most gracious to us, spending time with us in the following contexts: a celebration of the Eucharistic Liturgy with him in his private, daily Mass chapel; midday meal with him in groups of nine or 10 bishops; a private con-

versation with each diocesan bishop; and a more formal session with our full group. The formal session centers on greetings offered to the Holy Father by Cardinal John O'Connor, the leader of our delegation, and the delivery by John Paul II of a short address, generally called an allocution.

In addition to activities with Pope John Paul and visits to the resting places of Ss. Peter and Paul, the bulk of our time is spent meeting with several of the administrative departments — also called Dicasteries or Congregations — of the Holy See. Each of these bodies deals with a particular area of interest. Some examples: Education, Doctrine, Sacraments and Worship, Clergy, Bishops, Religious and Secretary of State. We will not have time to call on all of those agencies, but we are still in the process of deciding which ones we will include in the time available to us.

Most in our group will be staying at a new facility built in the Vatican to house bishops and others in Rome for such events as the upcoming Consistory of Cardinals, Papal Conclaves and other large Vatican-sponsored events. A few of us will be staying at the North American College, the seminary where I studied and later served as Spiritual Director. Given that history and the opportunity to do so, I cannot imagine staying any place in Rome but at the North American College.

I hope that all goes well with you and your loved ones.

Peace to all.

The Monthly Prayer Request For Priests

Will you pray for a priest each day?

JESUS' PRAYER FOR HIS PRIESTS

Keep them, I pray Thee, dearest Lord,
Keep them for they are Thine—
Thy priest whose lives burn out before
Thy consecrated shrine.
Keep them, for they are in the world,
Though from the world apart;
When earthly pleasures tempt, allure,
Shelter them in Thy heart.
Keep them, and comfort them in hours
Of loneliness and pain,
When all their life of sacrifice

For souls seems but in vain.
Keep them, and O remember, Lord,
They have no one but Thee,
Yet they have only human hearts,
With human frailty.
Keep them as spotless as the Host,
That daily they caress;
Their every thought and word and deed,
Deign, dearest Lord, to bless.

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Prayer Suggestions: Mass, Rosary, Fasting, Day Offering, Eucharistic Adoration, Offering Sufferings, Divine Mercy Chaplet

February, 1998

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1 Pope John Paul II	2 Inactive Priests	3 Msgr. Charles V. Boyle	4 Msgr. George A. Cocuzzi	5 James F. Doyle	6 William J. Gordinier	7 Bishop Matthew Clark
8 John Robbins	9 James Cronin, OSB	10 James R. Dolan, SJ	11 John Denburger, OCSO	12 Gerard Guli	13 Robert B. Hale, CSB	14 Andrew J. Kalafsky
15 James P. Malone, SJ	16 Donald E. McCarthy, CSB	17 John A. Morgan	18 Eugene O'Hara, OFM Cap	19 Michael Schramel	20 Paul J. Tomasso	21 Thomas W. Burr
22 Philip Weiner	23 Kenneth Sherman	24 William A. Moorby	25 George R. Norton	26 Oliver J. O'Connor, OFM Cap	27 Dennis J. Kauffman, CSB	28 Msgr. Gerard C. Krieg

Look for the March MPRP Calendar in the February 26th Courier.

To those who have been financially generous, we thank you—
to those who gave less, but from the largesse of their hearts, we thank you!
We wish all of you a blessed and happy New Year.

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